

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Response, claims 3-4, 7-9, 12-13, and 15-44 remain pending in the present patent application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 14 have been canceled, claims 3-4, 7-9, 15-17, 20, 29, 35, and 36 have been amended, and claims 37-44 have been newly added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the following remarks.

As an initial matter, Applicants wish to inform the Examiner that the amendments to the claims presented herein are made to place the application in condition for allowance based upon the indication of allowance of claims 7, 8, 14, and 15 in the Office Action of November 29, 2006 and in previous Office Actions. To this end, all of the independent claims of the present application include elements similar in scope with those included in claims 7, 8, 14, and 15, as originally filed. In addition, amendments have been made to various ones of the claims to eliminate elements added in prior amendments made in previous responses to prior Office Actions. To this end, we note that claims 7, 8, 14, and 15 were indicated as allowable before such elements were amended into the independent claims in the prior responses.

As an initial matter, in item 3 of the Office Action, claims 7, 8, 14, and 15 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 7 and 8 have been amended so as to appear in independent form, incorporating all of the elements of the base claims from which they depended. In addition, the subject matter of claim 14 was incorporated into independent claim 9, from which claim 14 originally depended. Therefore, Applicants assert that claim 9 is in condition for allowance for the same reasons as claim 14, where claim 14 is canceled herein, thereby rendering the objection to this claim moot. In addition, claim 15 has been amended so as to appear in independent form, incorporating all of the elements of claims from which claim 15 depended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 7, 8, 9, and 15 be withdrawn.

In item 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 3-6, 9, 11-13, and 16-36 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,655,130 issued to *Dodge et al.* (hereafter "*Dodge*") in view of U.S. Patent 6,029,182 issued to

Nehab et al. (hereafter “*Nehab*”). A prima facie case of obviousness is established only when the prior art teaches or suggests all of the elements of the claims. MPEP §2143.03, In re Rijckaert, 9 F.3d 1531, 28 U.S.P.Q2d 1955, 1956 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Applicants note that claims 1, 5, 6, and 11 have been canceled herein, thereby rendering this rejection moot with respect to such claims. In addition, Applicants note that claims 3 and 4 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 8, and claim 9 has been amended to incorporate subject matter of allowable claim 14. Also, claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 9 as amended.

In addition, independent claims 16, 17, 20, 29, 35, and 36 have been amended to incorporate subject matter similar in scope of that of allowable claims 7 and 8. Also, Applicants note that claims 18-19, 21-28, and 30-34 depend from claims 17, 20, or 29. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3-4, 9, 12-13, and 16-36 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

In addition, claims 37-44 have been added herein. Claims 37-44 depend from either claim 7 or claim 8, as indicated. Accordingly, Applicants request that these claims be allowed in conjunction with the allowance of claims 7 and 8.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing arguments and the amendments made in response to the previous office action, Applicant respectfully submits that all rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims 3-4, 7-9, 12-13, and 15-44 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,
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